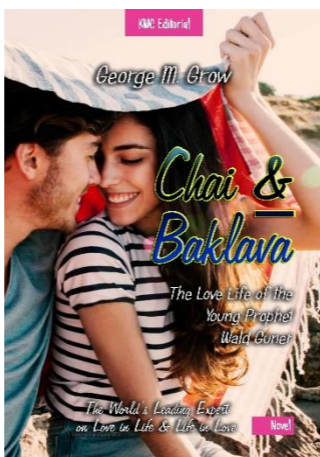
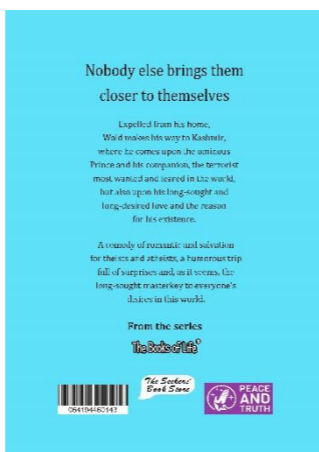


George M. Grow
Chai & Baklava
Romance

"Nobody else brings them
closer to themselves"



From the series
The Books of Life®



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The Pearl of the Orient

Wald walks over and opens the window. On the left, he looks out on a kindergarten with a park, straight ahead at a nine-story apartment house and on the very right on the Hospital of the Merciful Brothers.

As every Saturday afternoon, quite a number of windows are occupied. Men in short sleeves lean there and smoke or they dangle little children over the edge of the window. Other ones are filled up with fresh evening attire between which the head of a woman or a man can be fleetingly seen.

Evenly spread, at the street level, just a couple of steps away, there are a number of stores: a wine house with quality wine from Burgenland, a gourmet canteen, an abandoned shop hiding behind tinted windows and a store with various sorts of groceries. There, women go in and out or stand on the steps and talk, and a radio starts to play dreadfully. Then, for a time, Wald stares skywards to the perfect blue till his memory sends us back to that place:

The tent has been aired. Christian has opened two longish hatches and put the air in motion using his tray as fan. And as fast as the view was getting clear, it was becoming cool when the Prince, in his crème-white abbaa, was seeking to determine, whether Wald met the condition in order to serve the Prince not once, not twice but thrice: as a supplier of wood in favor of his dubious tribes, as the groom for his

beautiful niece and as the prophet and savior of this pitiful world, what led to his question, whether his guest is a real Moslem.

“Mr. Smith,” he said when Wald was biting into the double decker garnished with humus and vegetables. “As for my niece, I tell you without ceremony that she will be wed to a Moslem only, to a man deeply associated with Allah. If namely the faith dies out, night will fall on the soul of man. As you maybe know, our tradition demands that the parents and the marriage candidates frequent an Islamic scholar. Since I myself have such a position, I want you to abide by the protocol according to which the groom’s faith is tested to find out whether Allah will bless this marriage.”

In addition to that, the Prince gives Wald to understand that there were different catalogues of questions and that in his case, he had to use the one considering the fact that his parents are infidels as far as he was not mistaken in this point, which, as Wald conformed, was very true. Following this, Christian shuts the windows and he, not being averse to undergoing the inquiry in order to probe his knowledge of Islam in the presence of an Islamic scholar, is said to have mentioned something about the ranking of human beings, to which he responds that the old rankings should be turned upside down. Correspondingly, the august one ranks not on the highest but on the lowest level. Above him there are the worthy one, the contender, the candidate and on the last and highest level the patient. But that does

not mean plant, animal and man but rather carnivore, vegetarian, plant. Then queries follow which have been flowing out of Wald's brain as of this writing and reach the point where the Prince asks about the eternal philosophy that his guest referred to in the Internet but doesn't clarify there at all, the guest folds his arms and the Prince asserts that philosophizing and thinking in terms create more wrong ways than fruitful ways, while Wald is holding communion with his parameter, signpost or tunnel-passageway which says that thinking (except for mathematic and geometric objects like pyramids and straight lines, which do not occur naturally) is a description of subjective experience, but that there were also the pictorial and thirdly the injunctive description, therefore, the one which is similar to a recipe one follows before eating and interpreting the dish or one has to consider the preconditions of a scientific experiment in order to be able to interpret it correctly and leads to the experience before thinking and the Prince, twirling the hair of his meticulously cut mustache with two fingers, hardens on constructivism, puts the faith before any finished thinking and finds the truth so complicated that it was out of reach for man until the final day.

Wald, who came to appreciate the vocabulary of languages after he had overridden the seventeen-year-old Wittgenstein and the constructivists' hurdle and used the jewels of languages, which individually reflect light just slightly, to stud the crown he was wearing at

his uncle's estate in order to enlighten himself also mentally, says to the Prince, who has been touching some strings of his sympathy, that the truth is not complicated but rather mankind is. "Ho, ho, ho," the Prince responds in wonder.

"Not the truth but mankind? Verily, a prophet is speaking from within you! But if everything is so simple, why is everything descending into chaos?"

"Not everything, but mankind is."

The Prince's laughter is an unrestrained, wild, boisterous laughter.

"My son, my son, one might think you have an answer for everything, but I must confess, I like your answers. Is it a rule that we always find the simplest answer last?"

Wald licks his lips, thinks to himself that unity and simplicity are not far from each other and puts his handkerchief away.

"Possibly this is so," he responds. Then he puts on his glasses and asks what is with his niece for whom he had sent for him to come.

"My niece?" The Prince blinks for a better understanding and says,

"My friend! I told you at the beginning that my niece is beyond any doubt. You, Mr. Smith, are the one being tested!"

"But we have a deal."

"Yes, we have. Well, you know your rights, now, what do you want to know?"

"I'd love nothing better than to see a photo of her."

"A photo of my niece! Mr. Smith, what do you think where we are, in a blue movie theater? No, no, my friend, you'll be in for a surprise yet because it only gets better!"

"Better?"

“If you don’t behave like a stupid ass, you will have a chance setting your eyes on her this very night. She is in the womens’ tent. Don’t you hear the music and their gabbing? Cock an ear and listen to the literary voice pronouncing ‘lah’ as ‘voir’. That’s the sound of my niece Aaminah!”

We can hear the voices from outside now, too!

It might bear mentioning that the Prince calls his servant right through the tent wall, then he rubs his hands and asks,

“Well, my son, what are you thinking about?”

“Is she coming?”

“My valet is on the way. You are trembling, Mr. Smith! Oh, there she is, my tender flower!”

Wald turns his eyes to the entrance: Two women veiled in black jilbaabs. The one is short and fat, the other one is of normal physique. More cannot be seen: their garments cover everything from head to toe except for a pair of eye slits.

“Don’t stand there glued gaping, sit down!” the Prince shouts towards the mummies.

The considerably slimmer woman who would be His Reverence’s niece kisses the Prince’s cheeks each twice while the other one is chattering away in accusing tones. And while the Prince is explaining that she will find her passport in the same place where she has left it and is remembering all the things she has lost and had turned up yet, Wald is casting an eye at the potential bride. And just as he is used to waiting, taking a deep breath and saying grace before a meal in order

to enjoy it gratefully, he abides by the fast in order to be the king of the connoisseurs, he eschews all sorts of meat to look all the more forward to the dumplings cooked according to grandma's recipe on his birthdays, he takes the red cloth from his TV just once a week off in order to deprogram himself, he, from time to time, concentrates on just one recurring sentence in order to disperse himself within the things like a philosopher and poet again, he consistently restricts himself to only making slow, harmonious, gentle and conscious movements, to not harming the Unity of Gestures in order to invite good fortune to himself and he allows himself thousand other things just once a year, the same way, he is not disturbed by the promised beauty's veil. And while it seems as if she finds it pleasant that her uncle and the lady who came with her are busy with themselves, she averts her eyes from the magic sky above in order to set them on Wald whose mouth and eyes open wide when she suddenly reveals her face to him.

Wald Wittman, whose shyness exceeds his courage normally only in the presence of several beautiful bimbos, whose full attention is directed at Aaminah's bewitching yet honest smile, at her self-assured yet appreciative expression and not least at her smooth yet exalted attitude, returns the magic he is receiving from her, with his open smile instantaneously. The fact that he has to immediately think about Isabell, has not only to do with having learned to love everything in everything (which was much easier

and more lasting than loving everything separately) but with a special mixture of the species too. If we add the following note from his documents, the state of his taste for women until now can become evident. "The offense is," he notes, "that even the mixture of the species is subject to the esthetic law of nature, a matter of which I despair sometimes since this is living proof that my taste in women does not comply with a cultivated stimulus but again with a mere natural one which arises whenever I desire something in lieu of loving it."

"The attraction which Isabell exerted on me and the whole of Milan was hybrid in nature," he notes below. "Anyway, I love everything multi-hybrid, and the same way my picture of the homo integrales is one of a crossbred, mixed, bastardly nature. If I think of Isabell, I first envision the picture in which I lean against her breast with closed eyes and lower the book in my hand. After a while I get up, bend over her and carefully stroke her hair back. She, the Latin beauty whose Nordic coolness changed in temperament only during the handover of the most expensive gifts, was rather sour of this, since it revealed a kind of blemish: Her forehead, which comes into view now, was high, steep and broad at the same time, the latter making her a bit ox-like, and why I shouldn't say that since even her father compared the eyes of the goddess Aphrodite in the Museo Poldi with those of an ox. This forehead, which seemed to be curved outward by a powerful will, was decidedly too big for a woman's

face. Freed from her hair, it was as if it pressed Isabell's clean-cut features together and let her sturdy mouth and sturdy chin appear insignificantly as a weak base for the steep slope above them. The waves of my passion created a continual, questioning and nagging surge against it while her forehead also seemed to me to belong to a philosopher, such as I gratefully but rarely found it in the body of a vamp."

By the time the big Prince and his big sister are engaged in looking for the missing passport and the charming, unveiled girl is standing thin smilingly, with her arms crossed and with her head bowed closely in front of him and, at long last, Wald understands at her sight what we have learned just now, he gets absolutely caught up of her huge, gigantic, almost golf ball-sized eye-balls so that her glossy black pupils are unable to tell him anything. And before he puts himself at risk of looking up at her forehead, he pays attention to her small, softly, pinkish shiny mouth, to her little nose and the soft, rosy cheeks, then to her small, gentle hands and to her slight build and gaspingly notes with his heart pounding that her face's gentle and pale features consort with her big eyes and her black hair splendidly and that his mixture of the species, as he could find it neither on nor inside Isabell, are splendidly apparent with this girl. But suddenly she raises her hand, smiles over to him and recovers with a turn of her head her face so that all he can clearly see of the girl are her black eyes full of courage and power. And

after the Prince has broken away from his nagging sister, he says that the old goat complains it is still too cold for camping. "Uncle," the girl takes the floor. "Do you want to introduce us, or do you have to seek permission from Zawahiri first?"

"Oh, this one is to your liking, the Prince says delightedly. And how could that be?"

"Finally, something on the right side of fifty," the fat lady utters with a deep voice, picking through a heap of laundry.

"The wants imposed on the groom seem to be not particularly high," Wald utters at which the Prince comes closer and says,

"Rubbish, Mr. Smith! Now, since you are here, I'm in the happy position to introduce you to my niece Aaminah and her mother, my charming, adored and all-knowing sister Aisha!" And after they have made sure to each other that they find the meeting to be pleasing, to Wald's surprise, the Pearl curtseys. Then the Prince moves behind her, puts his massive hands on her shoulders and presents the girl as a clever, cultivated, charming and pious child from a highly regarded house, educated at a British boarding school and speaks English perfectly.

"I'm happy to hear your praising words even though it unfortunately happens very, very rarely, dear uncle."

Unfortunately, the Prince says, she sometimes was shrewish and cheeky; but when Wald will have taken a look behind her veil after he has accomplished his task, he could see that there will hardly be

a better match for him. Obviously, it slipped his attention that the Pearl has already bestowed a look under her shell on him what could convince him effortlessly that her honorific title relatives to the facts. And since he has been looking for having rapport with the facts all along, he responds her curtsy with a small, quick bow and invites her to have a seat at his side.

“Stop, that won’t do,” her goduncle interposes, shoving his paunch between himself and the girl. “Mr. Smith, you stay where you were. Aaminah and the old biddy squat down behind me on the dais. Here we go, chop-chop, children, we wanna hear what the Prophet tells us about the eternal history!” And when they have been seated so that my friend can look directly at the Prince, his big sister behind him on his left and his niece behind him on his right and the veiled man, from whom we can expect a big surprise yet, has returned to the place where he was sitting before, the Prince asks about the eternal philosophy.

“Uncle, it is called perpetual philosophy. The term labels the idea according to which there was a prevalent, official philosophy of the major part of civilized mankind during the majority of history. Differences between these directions only existed based on their view of how one can come to reach these truths. Aldencrownham is a traditional stronghold of transcendentality; there is no getting around that.”

“Ha, ha, ha, have you got that, my son! Such thing you won’t find in thousand years! As you can see, the

tuition I paid for her was not for the birds. I hope that your eternal philosophy will stand up to my Pearl and my humble self, Mr. Smith, and that it is fully in line with Islam and not a ...”

“Trojan Horse?”

“... otherwise, you can forget about that wedding!”

“That’s not my fear,” my friend responds, highly enthusiastic about the girl’s state of knowledge; and instead of giving proof that teachers are neither mystics nor scientists but parrots, he makes clear that the term “eternal philosophy” is certainly not to be found on his website, that truth could be detected by experience and that philosophy was its interpretation so that he praises the Five Pillars of Islam which (especially after their parametric renovation), permitted us to reset and gauge our empirical apparatus to perceive no more and no less than actually exists. And since this was not only the approach of Islam but the policy of every quest for truth, every orientation and every growth which isn’t left to chance, he wishes that they would construct a station in front of The Five Pillars so that his omnibus can stop there as it stopped at mosques, churches, temples, stupas and synagogues as well as at universities, academies, saloons and houses of pleasures.

“Omnibus,” asks the Pearl perking her eyebrows up.

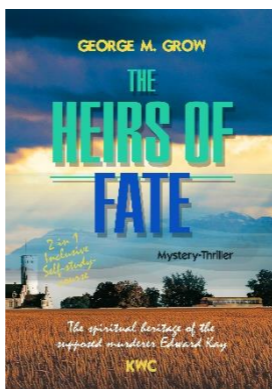
“That sounds funny,” her mom utters, having drawn herself up to her full height. She still hasn’t found her passport and seems to have forgotten her frustration briefly. Her thin eyebrows are

painted over and slanted demonically. At the beginning, she met Wald mistrustfully, but when she heard him talking about his omnibus, her eyes started to glitter. Even the Prince has caught fire and says,

“Well, Mr. Smith, well done, this is something worth hearing! If there is one truth and not tens of millions of truths from different ways of observation, there will always be chance for understanding and peace!”

End of the reading

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